

## **My Initial Thoughts**

I'm Bill Forrester. On 25 August, I assumed command of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (USACRC) and the responsibilities as your Director of Army Safety. It is my distinct honor and privilege. The Team at USACRC is committed and passionate in doing whatever it takes to preserve our combat power.

Initial burst of my thoughts in my short time are in three areas:

1st - Individual. We say the Army Safety Management Information System (ASMIS-2) is a winner. To date, there are five recorded deaths in the 1.3 million uses. Not only does the program give solid info to the user, it provides a built-in opportunity for the first-line supervisor to engage. This is a low pain, high gain initiative. So-what about the other 100+ Soldiers that were killed and didn't use ASMIS-2 (POV)?

2nd - Unit. Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP) is a Web-based initiative that provides battalion-level commanders with data on their formation's readiness posture. Consider that units scoring in the bottom 25% are four times more likely than the top 25% to experience a Class A mishap and the cost of lost equipment is 14 times greater than units scoring in the top 25%. ARAP is big bang for the bucks, yet enrollments are soft and completions softer.

3rd - Army. We say that accidental deaths are down about 20% from last year's tally. Yet, we are still 250% above our directed goal when using FY02 as the baseline for a 50% reduction. We are not winning - yet and there is clearly much work required.

So, what do we know?

We know our Warriors live and operate on the leading edge, but they should not be alone on the edge. Leaders must be there, engaged and accountable. Leaders must stay engaged. We must lead on the edge. There is no such thing as an anonymous leader. Leaders commit.

We know accountable leaders, engaged at the correct/appropriate echelon, immediately save lives and promote change in our Soldier's culture, instinct and intuition for our future. Consider that during the rise in motorcycle deaths this FY two thirds of the 45 fatalities were Sergeants and above. It is not just specialists that require or deserve engaged and accountable leaders.

We know that Preliminary Loss Reports (PLR) clearly reveal preventable mishaps where engaged leaders could have made a difference. Someone always knows...someone knows when a platoon member just bought a motorcycle but never completed required training...someone knows when an aviator's reputation is to 'cowboy' aircraft...someone knows when Soldiers routinely fail to buckle up when driving. Someone knows and should engage.

Our job as leaders and Soldiers: Engage. Engage at the lowest level. The tools are there and we only get the Soldiers we have now. There is no strategic reserve we can call up when the ones we have are DEAD. We know we "Never Leave a Fallen Comrade".

Please let the USACRC know how we can improve to preserve, maintain, and improve OUR Army.

**Leading on the Edge!**

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